

# Adult Day Services:

## *How to Choose a Quality Program*



Adult Day Services help frail seniors and adults with disabilities retain their independence and quality of life despite chronic health problems or memory loss by providing professional and compassionate daytime care and services in a community-based group setting. Caregivers receive respite from the demanding responsibilities of caregiving and can continue to work or attend to personal matters worry free. For many families, Adult Day Services is a welcome alternative to nursing home or other residential care.

The following steps will help you in your search for a quality adult day program. It may help to take this article with you when you interview potential providers.

### **Step 1: Determine Your Needs**

What specific services are important for your loved one?

- A safe, secure environment?
- Social activities?
- Assistance with eating, walking, toileting, medications?
- Therapies – physical, speech, occupational?
- Health monitoring – blood pressure, blood sugar, weight?
- Nutritious meals and snacks?
- Special diet?
- Exercise?
- Mental stimulation?
- Personal care – bathing, shaving, hair care, foot care?

What do you, the caregiver, need?

- Care while you work?
- Time to rest or attend to personal matters?
- Support?
- Transportation?
- Assistance in planning for care?

### **Step 2: Beginning the Search**

To find adult day services in your area, review the list of providers that begins on page 114. To locate other Oklahoma providers go to [www.okahsa.org/adsao.htm](http://www.okahsa.org/adsao.htm).

Start by calling the adult day centers you are considering and ask for a flier or brochure or visit their website.

Continue your search and ask well-planned questions. Here are some suggestions to get you started:

- Who is the owner or sponsoring agency? Is it a non-profit or for-profit organization?
- How many years has it been in operation?
- Is it Licensed by the Oklahoma State Department of Health?
- Is it nationally accredited by CARF (Commission on the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities)?
- What are the days and hours of operation?
- Is transportation assistance available?
- Are there special services available, e.g., hair care, assisted showers, nursing care and medication administration, restorative care, and physical, occupational, or speech therapy?



LIFE Senior Services

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- What is the cost (hourly or daily rates)? Are there additional charges?
- Is financial assistance available?
- What are the enrollment criteria? Any restrictions, e.g., age, health conditions, mobility, memory loss, incontinence, developmental disability?
- Are there multiple program areas based on care needs?
- Is there specialized Alzheimer's disease or dementia care plan available?
- What are the staff credentials? What is the number of staff per participant?
- Are there activities – therapeutic and varied? Examples?
- Are meals provided? Special diets? Snacks? Food prepared on-site or catered?

### Step 3: Pay a Visit

Make an appointment to meet with the staff and tour the centers on your list. You may find it helpful to make this initial visit alone or with other family members.

Using the following checklist will help you decide which adult day center is the right one for your family.

### Step 4: Check References

Talk to two or three people who have used the center you are considering. Ask for their opinion.

### Step 5: What To Expect

It's important to remember that a change in routine can be challenging for you and your loved one. It may take several days or even a little longer to adjust to the new routine and the setting. Knowing what to expect is important for both of you. Plan to visit ahead of time with the adult day staff about their procedures for welcoming new participants as well as what you can do to make the transition a smooth one. During this transition, if you run into any difficulty or have concerns, be sure to ask staff for their suggestions and support. Keep in mind that this transition period is temporary; your loved one will soon be enjoying and looking forward to their days at the center.

### Step 6: Take Care of Yourself

Although it might be difficult at first - relax. Your loved one is being well cared for. Use this time to

work without worry or to take some time for yourself. Talk with the staff about how your loved one enjoyed their day. Your loved one may not be able to recall all the activities enjoyed during the day. The staff will gladly provide the missing details.

Remember, the center's staff is there for you, too. Ask about caregiver support groups, tips to make caregiving easier, and information about other resources available in the community.

Adult day services helps families take care of one another. Following these steps can help you select the adult day program that is right for your family.

*Source: Adapted from an article by the National Adult Day Services Association*

Adult Day Services Site Visit Checklist	YES	NO
Did you feel welcomed?		
Did someone spend time finding out what you want and need?		
Did someone clearly explain what services and activities the center provides?		
Did they present information about staffing, program procedures, costs, and what they expect of caregivers?		
Was the facility clean, pleasant, and free of odor?		
Were the building and the rooms wheelchair accessible?		
Was the furniture sturdy and comfortable?		
Were there loungers for relaxation? Chairs with arms?		
Is there a quiet place for conferences?		
Is there a place to isolate sick persons?		
Did you see cheerful faces on staff and participants?		
Do volunteers help?		
Are participants involved in planning activities or making other suggestions?		

