
Adult Day Services—Tips and Suggestions

Adult Day Services (ADS) can provide many services to meet the needs of people with dementia. However, not all centers will accept people with dementia. Furthermore, ADS is not a 24-hour care solution, but it can be one part of the answer. The following information discusses the goals and benefits of ADS; tips on selecting ADS (including a checklist); common barriers; and other resources to call for more information on ADS.

Goals and Benefits of Adult Day Services

- The main goal of ADS is to achieve as much independence as possible for your loved-one and try to keep them at that level, thus enhancing dignity and quality of life.
- Help to delay the need for additional care (including the costs and care of nursing home placement).
- Offer rehabilitative services (Occupational, Physical and Speech therapy) to help achieve the highest level of independence possible and to promote better physical and mental health.
- Gives the caregiver a much needed respite break (4-8 hours a day is the general range, with extended hours possible). It may also give adult children the opportunity to return back to work.
- ADS centers may also offer health, education and support services performed by trained professionals.
- May be more reliable and affordable (on average, could be 50% less) than some in-home agencies.
- Opportunity to socialize (peer to peer interactions), enjoy recreational activities (playing cards, music, art), all in a stimulating and supportive environment.
- May help your loved one sleep better at night after a full day of activities.
- Facilities may also provide Bathing/Showers, Beautician/Hair Care, Dental Care, Intergenerational Programs, Overnight Program, Podiatry, and Weekend Programs. Please confirm with the Adult Day Service as to the specifics of their programs.

Selecting an Adult Day Service

Obtain a list of Adult Day Centers—Reference the attached listing from us, the Alzheimer's Association, St. Louis Chapter. We only list the **licensed** centers that provide care for people with dementia. If the ADS listing is not attached, please call our 24-hour Helpline at 1-800-980-9080 to obtain the list.

Identify 2-3 Potential Centers—Call each of the potential centers and get more information about them. Find out what the current participants are able to do. Ask them to mail their current brochure, application, activity calendar, menu, and eligibility requirements.

Try to Determine Your Loved-Ones Needs—As you wait for the material, jot down your loved-one needs.

- Can he/she participate in social activities and mentally stimulating activities?
- Will he/she need assistance with eating, medicine, toileting, and walking?
- Does my loved-one tend to wander off?
- Determine exercise capability. Is therapy (physical, speech, occupational) needed?
- Is there any health services needs like blood pressures and blood sugar checks?
- Is there any special diet restrictions regarding meals & snacks?
- What are some personal care needs like bathing, beautician services and shaving?

Make Your Visit—Call and make an appointment to visit and take the following checklist with you. It is best to compare 2-3 facilities. The goal is to see if the facility will be a good match for your loved-on and provide a safe and interactive environment. Safety and quality care should always be a top expectation. At your visit, always ask for some references of people currently using the center and ask their opinion.

Question	Facility 1		Facility 2		Facility 3	
Facility Name→						
Did the staff make you feel welcomed?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Was the staff excited to provide you with a tour?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Did the staff seem helpful and responsive to needs?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Was the facility clean and absent of unpleasant odors?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Did the participants seem happy? Enjoying themselves?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Did staff explain their services?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Did staff discuss their activity calendar and events?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Will my loved-one be able to do the planned activities?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Who plans the activities – staff, participant and/or family?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Was the admission process clearly explained?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Did you review the fee policy and minimum days?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Was the staff open to hearing your needs?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Did you review staff’s ability to handle difficult issues?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Was the staff open to changes suggested by caregivers?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Will a wheelchair easily fit in the bathrooms and rooms?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Is there a separate room for participants who are sick?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Is there a quiet place for staff and caregiver conferences?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Is there a plan to protect participants from wandering?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Is there fire safety inspection up to date?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Is there an evacuation plan in case of emergency?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Can the center handle my loved-ones needs?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Can the center provide special diet needs?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Do participants need to bring anything?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No

Other Questions

- What is your view on caring for people with dementia?
- Does the center comply with the law for yearly Dementia Specific training? If so, how is this done?
- How many years have you been a licensed ADS? Who owns, operates and/or manages the ADS?
- Are the days, hours and fees correct as listed on the Alzheimer’s Association ADS list?
- How will transportation be arranged?
- How will the bills be charged (weekly, monthly)?
- What is the ratio between participant and staff?

Select a Center and Commit to Start a Trial—Pick the center you feel your loved-one will do well at. We also suggest that you give it a try it for three to five days. Every new routine takes some time before people get comfortable in a new setting. If you have any questions or you experience any problems, ask for a conference. Staff may have suggestions to make the transition easier both at home and at the center. Take care of yourself while your loved one is being cared for. The more caregivers can get a break and “recharge”, the more focused and responsive they will be to their loved-ones needs. If it doesn’t work after 3-5 days, try again in a few months.

Barriers to Using Adult Day Services

Caregivers and loved ones may face some difficulties when utilizing an Adult Day Service. Below are possible scenarios and suggestions for dealing with challenging situations.

The cost is too expensive. Most centers are private pay and Medicare or private health insurance does not cover the costs. However, other forms of payment could include Medicaid, Scholarships, SLAAA, MEAAA, Veterans, IdoA, Department of Rehab. Services. Furthermore, some centers operate on a sliding scale fee and try their best to offer lower cost options. On average, ADS could be 50% less than some in-home agencies.

My loved one says he/she does not want to go.

- Represent the ADS as a social club where he/she can meet new friends.
- Have your doctor recommend that he/she attend or write it out as a prescription.
- Tell your loved one that he/she is going to work or to the “office.” This may help them find meaning in the activities and help them feel more secure.
- For early stage or less impaired individuals, offer it as a volunteer opportunity. Most adult day cares will cooperate by finding additional tasks for your loved one.
- Reassure your loved one that you will pick them up at a certain time or be there when they get home from the day care.

My loved one is not as impaired as other participants.

- Maximize this situation by telling your loved one they are “volunteering” and others need his/her help. If your loved one is in a safe environment with other impaired individuals, they may be able to relax and feel more competent.
- Be realistic about the situation—will your loved one view everyone as different, or is this your perception?

My loved one is not adjusting.

- Remember that change is difficult and adjustment may take a few weeks.
- Perhaps begin the adult day care experience with an initial visit followed by lunch, then continue taking your loved one for brief visits--building up to a full day.
- Regular attendance of two days a week or more may help to speed up the adjustment.

My loved one does not participate or do anything at the adult day care.

- Do not take the person literally. They may not remember what they did. Ask the staff about your loved one’s participation.
- A “good” adult day care will offer many activities for all participants.
- Some activities may be more enjoyable for your loved one than others.
- Because of cognitive impairment, it may be difficult at times for your loved one to plan and carry out activities.
- Even if your loved one is not participating in some of the activities, he/she can still enjoy people, laughter, music, and a chance to get out of the house.

What are some other resources to contact?

The **Missouri Adult Day Care Association (MoADCA)** is dedicated to the growth and development of adult day services and to the service of its members.

2420 Hyde Park Road, Suite A

Jefferson City, MO 65109

(573) 634-3566

<http://www.moadca.org>

Illinois Adult Day Services Association

6141 North Cicero Avenue

Chicago, IL 60646

(773) 202-4130

The **National Adult Day Services Association (NADSA)** is a 20-year-old organization dedicated to enhancing the success of its members through advocacy, education, technical assistance, research and communication services.

8201 Greensboro Drive, Suite 300

McLean, Virginia 22102

(866) 890-7357 or (703) 610-9035

<http://www.nadsa.org>

or E-mail: info@nadsa.org