
Adult Day Services—Tips and Suggestions

Visit our Community Resource Finder at www.communityresourcefinder.org to get easy access to a comprehensive listing of Alzheimer's and dementia resources, community programs and services including Adult Day Services.

What are Adult Day Services(ADS)?

According to the National Adult Day Services Association (NADSA), an ADS can provide a comprehensive range of services to meet the needs of a person with dementia. They provide social and recreational activities and meals. Other services may include: nursing care, individual treatment plans, transportation to and from the day center, and support groups for caregivers. ADS are typically for weekday respite with a few centers offering weekend and overnight respite. An ADS can benefit both adults needing assistance and caregivers. The goal is to try and keep your loved one at home for as long as safely possible, while also receiving needed care in a supportive, professionally staffed, community-based setting.

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.

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, if necessary.
- 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) and enjoy recreational activities (playing cards, music, art) all in a stimulating and supportive environment.
- Gives the opportunity for the caregiver and person with dementia to spend some time apart doing their own activities and getting a break from each other.
- 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 transportation. Please confirm with the Adult Day Service provider for the specifics of their programs.

Selecting an Adult Day Service

Obtain a list of Adult Day Centers—The Alzheimer's Association Community Resource finder provides a list of licensed providers. Go to www.communityresourcefinder.org and select Care at Home. Additional resources can be found by calling the Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline at 800.272.3900. Or, go to <http://www.alz.org/care/alzheimers-dementia-adult-day-centers.asp>

What are some other resources to contact?

MO Dept of Health and Senior Services

<http://health.mo.gov/seniors/nursinghomes/pdf/ADC-licensed.pdf>

Missouri Adult Day Care Association (MoADCA)

2420 Hyde Park Road, Suite A

Jefferson City, MO 65109

(573) 634-3566

<http://www.moadsa.org>

Illinois Adult Day Services Association

6141 North Cicero Avenue

Chicago, IL 60646

(773) 202-4130

<http://www.iadsa.com>

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

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.

Determine Your Loved-Ones Needs—As you start to consider ADS, 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 he/she tend to wander off?
- Determine exercise capability. Is therapy (physical, speech, occupational) needed?
- Is there a need for health services like blood pressures and blood sugar checks?
- Are 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↑
Did the staff show interest in the needs of your loved one?	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 the services available?	Yes↑ No↑	Yes↑ No↑	Yes↑ No↑
Did staff discuss their activity calendar and events?	Yes↑ No↑	Yes↑ No↑	Yes↑ No↑
Will your 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 sick or tired participants?	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 the 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 your 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↑
Is the furniture sturdy and comfortable?	Yes↑ No↑	Yes↑ No↑	Yes↑ No↑
Are the small group areas?	Yes↑ No↑	Yes↑ No↑	Yes↑ No↑
Is it a secured environment? Alarms, wander guards, etc.?	Yes↑ No↑	Yes↑ No↑	Yes↑ No↑

Other Questions to ask the ADS staff

- 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 has the program been a licensed ADS?
- Who owns, operates and/or manages the ADS?
- What are the hours of operation?
- What fees do they charge? How will the bills be charged (weekly, monthly)?
- What types of payments are accepted?
- Is financial assistance available?
- How will transportation be arranged?
- What is the ratio between participant and staff?
- Is staffing based on participant's needs?

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 or consider switching to a different ADS.

Potential 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. Medicare and private health insurance does not cover the costs. However, other forms of payment could include: Medicaid, Scholarships, Area Agency on Aging, Veterans, and Department of Rehabilitation 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 services 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 services.
- Set up an appointment with an ADS. While out for another purpose, drive by the ADS and say, “Let’s stop by this senior club.”

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 service 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 service.

- 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 service 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.
- Give your loved one positive feedback (i.e. “I’m so glad you had the opportunity to meet new friends”, “I’m so glad you were able to enjoy some activities”, “I’m so glad that you were able to help others at the club”).