



Adult Day Care Centers

If you are caring for an adult loved one, adult day care centers may be a viable care option that can offer supervision while you are at work; provide you with a break from your caregiving duties; and/or give seniors the opportunity to socialize and interact with peers. This guide provides an overview of adult day care centers—services, staffing, cost, licensing and regulations—and provides tips on how to evaluate a facility.

What Are Adult Day Care Centers?

Adult day care centers are designed for seniors who need structure, supervision and guidance due to physical frailties or mental impairments. The philosophy of care differs from center to center. Some programs offer social and recreational activities only; others are specifically suited to individuals with Alzheimer's disease or dementia; and still others are equipped to care for adults who require hands-on care or medical supervision. Given the various philosophies of care, most adult day care centers require applicants to be evaluated prior to admittance to ensure that the center is equipped to care for their specific needs.

Regardless of the care philosophy, all adult day care programs are intended to provide social and recreational activities in a safe, secure environment to promote community involvement and self-esteem. They also enable caregivers to take time off to attend to their own needs.

There are about 3,000 adult day care centers in the United States, and most are nonprofit. Others are owned and operated by private organizations such as hospitals or nursing homes. Because of the diverse ownership, the services, size, cost and staffing requirements vary. Most are open Monday through Friday

"My father lives in my home," explains Carly, "and he's alone all day while I'm at work. I've been thinking about trying to find an adult day care program that will give him the chance to socialize with some other seniors, but he has trouble getting around. Can an adult day care center accommodate someone like him?"

and offer part- or full-day sessions, though some centers may offer weekend and evening hours as well.

Services

Although most adult day care centers offer recreational activities and meals in a supervised setting, the type and extent of services vary from center to center and, again, will depend largely on the type of care offered.

Adult day care center services may include:

- Meals or snacks
- Medication dispensing and supervision
- Transportation
- Physical therapy
- Personal care assistance
- Occupational therapy
- Exercise (appropriate to age and physical ability)
- Social and recreational activities (e.g., sing-alongs, card games, bingo)
- Entertainment (e.g., live music, movies, plays)
- Educational opportunities (e.g., guest speakers, discussion groups)
- Medical supervision/services, such as blood pressure screenings, flu shots and other wellness programs



- Pet therapy, or the opportunity to interact with animals. (Studies have shown that adults respond well to animals, and that interaction with animals may actually enhance health.)

Staffing

Staffing also varies and, again, will depend largely on the philosophy of care. For example, a center that offers medical care will have a nurse on duty at all times, while a center that offers social and recreational activities only may be staffed by social workers and activities directors. Ask each center about staffing requirements and qualifications.

Adult day care center staff may include:

- Physical therapists (PTs)
- Speech therapists
- Occupational therapists (OTs)
- Registered nurses (RNs)
- Home health aides (HHAs), personal care aides (PCAs) and certified nurses' aides (CNAs)
- Social workers
- Activity coordinators

Cost

Cost of adult day care programs can range from \$35 to \$150 per day (or more) depending on the program and the area in which you live. Though Medicare generally does not cover the cost of adult day care, Medicaid and many private insurance policies do. Some states may also offer reduced-cost or free care to individuals who fall below a certain income level. Some adult day care centers offer sliding fee scales, which allow an economically disadvantaged person to pay based on his or her income.

Licensing and Regulation

Some states require adult day care centers to be licensed, however, regulations vary from state to state. Check with your state or local Aging Office or Department of Social

Services office to find out if licensing is mandated in your state.

Evaluating an Adult Day Care Center

Carefully evaluate and assess each center you are interested in. Visit each center twice—once at an appointed time and once unannounced. If you are seeking a center for a loved one, bring him or her with you at least once. In general, look for a clean environment with a well-trained staff. Talk with participants and their family members and pay close attention to the atmosphere and moods of participants. Carefully interview the director of the program, and ask if a trial enrollment period can be arranged. For your convenience, we've provided a detailed evaluation checklist at the end of this guide.

Helpful Resources

Eldercare Locator Hotline

National Association of Area Agencies on Aging
 927 15th Street N.W., Sixth Floor
 Washington, DC 20005
 800-677-1116
 202-296-8130
www.eldercare.gov

This nationwide service refers people to state and local organizations on aging. It is a public service of the United States Administration on Aging, administered by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (NAAAA) and the National State Units on Aging. The NAAAA web site listed above can link you to the Eldercare Hotline or you may call toll-free.

National Council on Aging (NCOA)

300 D Street S.W., Suite 801
 Washington, DC 20024
 202-479-1200
 800-424-9046
www.ncoa.org

This organization can provide general information about aging and housing options—and referrals to local services and programs for elder care. The web site also provides general information about adult day care and other care options.

Checklist for Evaluating an Adult Day Care Center

Consider using this checklist to help you evaluate and assess adult day care centers. Make copies and take one with you to each center you visit.

Name of Center: _____

Licensing and Operations

1. Is the center required to be licensed? No Yes

By whom? _____

2. Is the program inspected by state or local officials? No Yes

Please explain: _____

3. Are the results of the inspection available? No Yes

May I see a copy? _____

Program Philosophy and Policies

4. What is your philosophy of care? _____

5. Is an assessment performed to determine the needs of each individual? No Yes

6. Who performs the assessment? _____

7. Where is the assessment performed?

At the center At the resident's home

Other: _____

8. Are there any trial periods that an individual can participate in before enrolling?

No Yes Please explain: _____

9. Can a participant be asked to leave the program? No Yes

Please explain: _____

Services

10. Are part- or full-day options available?

Morning sessions. Note specific times: _____

Afternoon sessions. Note specific times: _____

Full day. Note specific times: _____

11. **What scheduled closings are planned (holidays, etc.)?** _____
12. **Do you offer backup care?** No Yes
Please explain: _____
13. **Does the center provide transportation?** No Yes What is the cost? _____
14. **Can alternative transportation be arranged if not provided by the center?**
 No Yes What is the cost? _____
15. **What types of services does the center offer?**
- Recreational and social activities. Describe: _____
 - Medical care or supervision. Describe: _____
 - Personal care assistance. Describe: _____
 - Health care screenings. Describe: _____
 - Therapy. Describe: _____
 - Other services: _____

Food Services

16. **What meals and/or snacks are provided?**
- Breakfast Morning snacks Lunch
 - Afternoon snacks Dinner
17. **Is there an additional charge associated with food services?** No Yes
What is the cost? _____
18. **Can the center accommodate special dietary needs?** No Yes
Please explain: _____

Staff and Training

19. **What type of staff do you employ?**
- Recreational therapists Personal care aides (PCAs)
 - Activities directors Certified nurses' aides (CNAs)
 - Social workers Speech therapists (SLPs)
 - Physical therapists (PTs) Occupational therapists (OTs)
 - Home health aides (HHAs) Registered nurses (RNs)
 - Other: _____
20. **Are staff members required to be licensed and/or certified?** No Yes
Please explain: _____
21. **Are staff members specially trained to meet the needs of patients requiring custodial care? Skilled care?** No Yes Please explain: _____

22. Does the center provide ongoing training to keep staff members' skills current?

No Yes Please explain: _____

23. What policies are in place for staff supervision? _____

24. What is the staff-to-participant ratio (the number of staff members per participant)?

25. Does the center provide individual attention to each participant?

No Yes Please provide an example: _____

Activities

26. What types of activities does the program offer? _____

27. What activities, if any, are geared toward patients with medical restrictions? _____

28. Are any therapeutic activities offered? No Yes

Please explain: _____

29. What kind of entertainment/recreational activities are offered? _____

30. Are any activities mandatory? No Yes Which ones? _____

31. Is the center sensitive to religious preferences? No Yes

Please explain: _____

32. Does the center sponsor/offer excursions or trips? No Yes

Please explain: _____

Outdoor Activities

33. Does the center have a safe and secure walking/sitting area outside?

No Yes

34. Does the center plan outdoor activities or programs? No Yes

Please explain: _____

35. Are outdoor activities supervised? No Yes By whom?

Safety

36. **What safety features does the facility offer?**

- Grab bars
- Wander-proof security system
- Railings
- Emergency evacuation plan
- Non-slip surfaces
- Emergency pull cords
- Ramps for wheelchair accessibility
- Other: _____

37. **Is the building handicapped-accessible?** No Yes

38. **Are the bathrooms handicapped-accessible?** No Yes

Finances and Insurance

39. **What forms of insurance does the center accept?**

- Medicare
- Medicaid
- Private Insurance. What type? _____

40. **Are any other financial programs in place to help cover the cost of the center?**

- No
- Yes
- Please explain: _____

41. **What are the billing, payment and credit policies?** _____

42. **Are rates clearly outlined?**

- No
- Yes

43. **Will rates increase?** No Yes Please explain: _____

General Observations

Ask yourself the following questions when touring the center:

44. **Is the building clean?** No Yes

45. **Are there any unpleasant odors?** No Yes

46. **Is the center well-lit?** No Yes

47. **Is the center appropriately heated/cooled?** No Yes

48. **Are the staff members friendly and available to answer questions?**

- Always
- Sometimes
- Rarely

49. **Do staff members interact well with participants?**

- Always
- Sometimes
- Rarely

50. **Are volunteers available to provide assistance and companionship, or to conduct activities?** No Yes

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