

Questions to ask when evaluating a potential day program for your child

Ask the questions that are most important to you. It is recommended that you make a second visit to the facility you select to ensure you and your child are comfortable with the choice.

The Facility

- Ask to be shown around all the locations at the facility. Is the entire facility accessible to clients?
- When is the facility open – hours and days of the week. When is it closed for holidays?
- Must clients attend full-time or can they come part-time? What happens if a client does not attend for a week or more due to illness or a family vacation or similar activity?
- How many clients attend the program?
- How long has the facility been in operation?
- Is this facility part of a large provider? If so, how large is the provider and how many facilities does it run? How long has the provider operated long-term care facilities?

Staff Training

- What qualifications are required to work at the facility?
- What training is given to new staff members? Are the staff trained to work with people with developmental disabilities?
- How is the staff trained? Are they trained on the job, by going through manuals, or is the training offered by presenters?
- Are staff members required to take annual refresher training? Who gives the training and what subjects are covered?

Staff Turnover

- How many staff work at the location? How long have most of the staff worked at the facility?
- What is the average time a caregiver working with the residents will stay at the facility?
- Do staff members have a benefits package?
- Is there a staff recognition program? Do you see “Employee of the Month” photos in the facility?

Staff

- What is the staff-to-resident ratio on all shifts? On outings?
- How much supervision is provided for residents? Is there anything to stop a resident from walking or running out of the facility?
- Is there an LPN or RN on duty?
- What type of criminal and abuse/neglect background checks are run on staff? How often are these repeated?
- What is the hiring policy if a person has a criminal record?
- Does the facility do drug testing and what is the policy on this? What would happen if a staff member has a negative result?
- If a staff member is having difficulties with a resident, who does he or she contact for help? What resources are available to support the staff member on duty in providing the best care? What is the organizational structure in the facility?
- Does the facility use volunteers? In what capacity? Do they go through background checks?

Safety Procedures

- What are the plans for emergencies (such as fires, tornadoes, elopements, etc)?
- Are the plans posted?
- Are there practice drills; how often?

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Medications/Health

- Does the facility have the ability to dispense medications?
- If so, where are medications kept?
- Who distributes the medications?
- How does the facility handle "as needed" medications?
- Does the facility perform health checks (blood pressure, vision)?
- What is the facility's procedure for dealing with clients who do not feel well (not a medical emergency)?
- How does the facility handle a medical emergency?

Behavior

- How are negative behaviors handled? What techniques are implemented by staff when a resident displays disruptive or abusive behavior?
- What negative behaviors would exclude an individual from living at that facility?
- Describe any behaviors exhibited by your child and find out how the facility would deal with these behaviors.

Activities of Daily Living

- What independent skills must the residents have? (Mobility, toileting, feeding self.)
- Describe specific needs your child has and find out if the facility can handle these needs (frequent seizures, feeding through a tube, suctioning a trach, etc.).
- What is the daily schedule?
- When is lunch served? Are snacks available during the day? Does the program provide lunch or must the client bring a meal from home?
- What are the typical foods served for lunch? Are there any choices? Can you get a copy of a recent menu for the month or week?
- Can the facility accommodate special diets? Discuss your child's needs.
- If a resident misses lunch due to sleeping or lack of cooperation, can he or she receive food at a later time?
- Do the staff help clients maintain and improve on abilities?
- Are physical, occupational or speech therapies offered at the facility? How are these funded?
- Does the facility offer extras such as hairstyling, podiatry services, bathing, or flu shots?

Activities

- What activities are provided at the facility?
- Is there a written plan of activities for each client? How often are the plans reviewed? Does the family have input on the plan?
- Do the residents go out into the community, where, how often? What happens if a resident doesn't want to go on the activity?
- Are the residents and/or the families involved in planning community activities?
- Who pays for outside activities? If the client must pay, what is the standard cost?
- Are there any extra fees or costs for attending the facility (not covered by Medicaid or other funding)?

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Complaints and History of Facility

- How does the facility process concerns and complaints from clients or guardians?
- Have there been any reports of client abuse reported to the Division of Family Support or Division of Senior Services?
- If the facility is a regular adult daycare or medical needs facility subject to inspections by the state, ask to see a copy of its last inspection record.
- Can families visit at any time?
- Does the facility offer a support group for families?

Assess the Atmosphere of the Facility

- Is the facility clean, cheerful and odor free?
- Is the furniture sturdy and appropriate for the clients?
- Are there positioning alternatives so clients do not have to remain in wheelchairs throughout the day?
- If visiting during meal time, does the food look appealing and is it served in a sanitary way?
- Do the staff seem relaxed and friendly?
- Do the clients look happy?
- Do you think the facility could meet your child's needs?
- Were all your questions answered thoroughly and completely?
- Can the director supply the names and phone numbers of families that can be called as references for the facility?