



SUGGESTED STEPS FOR INVESTIGATION OF ADULT SERVICE OPTIONS

Getting started with the search for adult services for your child is often the most difficult “first step”. Once you have some experience investigating different options, it will be much easier for you and your child to continue your search for adult services. Here are some suggestions for beginning your search.

Begin to determine the unique needs of your child and family. You know your child best. Does your child feel most comfortable in large or small groups or in individual settings? Does your child need more experience with peers other than family members? Does your child have medical needs that will need attention? What activities does your child enjoy? How will the hours of your child’s adult services affect your family’s schedule? Think about the environment that you feel would best suit your child.

Identify several programs that might be beneficial to your child. Your child’s Service Coordinator and/or School District Representative can help with this. Friends, relatives, other parents and professionals can all provide recommendations for programs they might know. Prepare to investigate these programs by developing a list of questions that you can ask on the phone or in person. A sample checklist is included on the following pages.

Screen programs by telephone call. Prepare a list of anything that is absolutely necessary for your child. For example, proximity to home, hours of program, employment opportunities, recreational opportunities, etc. Use these kinds of questions to help you determine which service options/programs warrant a tour and which will not fit your needs. This will save you time and allows you to focus on the possibilities instead of the problems.

Discuss the range of options with adult service personnel and arrange to visit programs with your child’s Service Coordinator, if possible. Different programs have differing policies on visitation. If you cannot visit immediately, ask to talk with personnel and/or parents already involved in the program. Prepare a list of items you want to observe on your visit or use the provided checklist. Make notes after the visit of what you liked or didn’t like about the programs and what will be beneficial to your child.

Prior to the IEP/IPP meeting, try to identify potential programs for your child. Remember that the IEP/ IPP team will make suggestions for programs for your child based on all of the gathered evaluations, service options and needs of your child. You and your child will be able to visit any adult service programs recommended before you agree that your child can attend that program. Even if you have not yet visited a particular program, you will be able to contribute your opinions to the discussion because you will know the range of options available for children with special needs and the unique needs of your child.

Program

- The atmosphere is relaxed and accepting.
- A written statement of policy concerning behavior management is given to consumers/families.
- The length of the day is appropriate.
- There is a daily schedule with a good balance of activities/ community events.
- The age/ability range of the consumers in the program suits your child's needs.

Staff

- There are enough adults to guide and supervise the number of consumers.
- Professionals have the necessary credentials/certifications, including first aid.
- Staff is able to communicate with consumers in a variety of languages/ways (non-English speakers, ASL, PECS, etc.).
- Staff provides the consumers with guidance during activities.
- The staff creates a warm and comfortable environment for the consumers.
- The staff communicates well with consumers and families.

Services Provided

- Consumers participate in community events.
- Music, art, drama programs are available.
- Academic enrichment is available.
- Consumers have access to computers and the Internet.
- Recreational/sports programs are available.
- Transportation is provided by the program.
- Training on public transportation system is available.
- Training on self-help skills is available.
- Training on strengthening self-advocacy skills is available.
- Training on strengthening positive behaviors is available.
- Training on self-help skills such as money handling and traffic safety are available.
- Nutritious meals and/or snacks are provided.
- Employment training is available.
- Supported living training is available.

Parent Participation

- ___ Parent/professional communication occurs regularly.
- ___ Observation by parents is allowed.

Facility

- ___ Facility is clean & well maintained.
- ___ Spaces are sectioned into areas for play, work, or quiet times.
- ___ Space is provided in the room for a jackets/backpacks for each consumer.
- ___ There is adequate space for the number of consumers in the program.
- ___ Adequate heating and cooling is provided.
- ___ There is an outdoor area, which consists of grass and dirt, covered and uncovered, hard and soft areas.
- ___ Drinking water is available.
- ___ There are enough restrooms.
- ___ It is wheelchair accessible.
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- ___ Parking lot has handicapped parking as well as a ramp to sidewalk.

- ___ Facility provides services to consumers with significant medical needs.
- ___ Fire drills are held regularly.
- ___ The facility has a working kitchen.

Activities

- ___ There are a variety of activities so that each consumer has a chance to be successful.
- ___ Consumers are grouped for activities, either by skill level or interest.
- ___ Learning is recognized as an active process.
- ___ Activities are planned which are creative and productive.
- ___ Consumers participate in self-directed, individual activities, and group activities.
- ___ Activities that include strengthening communication skills are included.
- ___ Music activities, including singing, listening to music, playing instruments and dancing are included.
- ___ Art activities that encourage experimenting and creating are included.
- ___ Consumers have opportunities to read or to listen to reading.

- _____ If consumers watch television at the site, staff direction is used to encourage consumer discussion about what they are watching.
- _____ Consumers participate in community events.
- _____ Consumers participate in activities that require the use of gross muscles (legs and arms) and fine muscles (fingers).
- _____ Consumers are provided with experiences that stimulate all their senses: hearing, seeing, touching, tasting and smelling.
- _____ Consumers have the opportunity to learn about services in their community.
- _____ Consumers have the opportunity to use community services such as the library and parks & recreation services.

Materials

- _____ There are enough materials for a variety of activities.
- _____ Consumers can supply materials.
- _____ Books on a wide range of interests are available.
- _____ Computers are available for use by the consumers.
- _____ Materials are appropriate for the skill range of the consumers.

Vocabulary and Note Space

Write down any terms or words that are unfamiliar to you. Ask for an explanation so you will understand the significance of what is being discussed.