



How to Choose a Residence That is Right for You

When looking for a long-term residence, including an adult foster care home, home for the aged or unlicensed assisted living, it is good idea to visit as many places as possible. This will give you an idea what options are available. While you are looking, you should consider your current needs and how those needs may change in the future. You should set some priorities for what is most important to you in a home, and determine what you can afford.

When you have narrowed down your choices, make another visit. Vary the time of the visit, come unannounced. To get a better idea of what life at the home is like, talk with residents and get their impressions.

If the facility is licensed as an Adult Foster Care Home or a Home for the Aged, ask to see the home's latest state inspection report. Review the report with the admissions person or administrator. Ask for clarification of any citation that impacts those things important to you.

CHECK LIST

Location

- Is the home in a convenient location?
- Is it close to community services and resources that you use (e.g., doctor offices, shopping mall, movie theater, church)?

Environment and Safety

- Is the entrance to the home safe?
- Are the entry and parking lot well lit?
- How is the exterior appearance of the home?
- How is the interior appearance of the home; is it clean or cluttered?
- Is the home a comfortable temperature with good air circulation? Is there an odor?
- Are their working smoke detectors, emergency fire sprinkler system, and monthly fire drills?
- Does the home have a security system/alarms?
- Does staff know what to do in the case of an emergency or fire? (Ask staff)
- Is there an emergency call system?

- How are medical emergencies handled?
- Does staff appear pleasant, attentive to residents, and respectful?
- Is the staff well groomed?
- Which staff people provide direct care? (Talk to some care staff)

Staffing and Training

- What is the ratio of direct care staff to residents?
- Does the home bring in help from home health care agencies?
- What initial and ongoing training is provided for staff?
- How frequently are staff evaluations conducted?
- Who supervises direct care staff?
- If an RN is on staff, what are his/her hours, role, and responsibilities?
- Who provides additional services when needed?
- Are staff trained in preventive oral hygiene care?
- How long does the average person work for the home?
- What is being done to retain staff?

Quality of Life

- Do residents appear happy, relaxed, and comfortable?
- Do residents appear properly groomed and dressed?
- Do residents appear healthy?
- Is there a plan in place to maintain the quality of services and care for residents?
- Is there community involvement with the home? How is the home involved in the community? (e.g., daycare for children, block parties, meetings held at the home)
- How does the home accommodate family and friends who visit?
- Are residents involved in program design, evaluation, management, and policy development?
- Is the assistance of a physical or occupational therapist available?
- Does the residence have a dentist or dental hygienist on call?

Activities and Daily Living

- How are medications distributed and who supervises?
- Does the pharmacy provide delivery services, consultations, and medication review?

- Is there an activity schedule?
- Is there a variety of activities and times when they are offered? Is there an exercise program?
- Are there specific hours when guests may visit?
- Is there a private room available for entertaining guests?
- Are coffee, tea, and other beverages available to offer guests?
- What is the food like? (Ask if you can have lunch at the home)
- How are meals planned?
- Are special diets accommodated?
- Are residents involved in menu planning?
- Are snacks available during the day?
- Are bed linens and towels provided?
- Is transportation provided? Is there access to public transportation?
- How are personal likes and dislikes, habits, routines, and activities accommodated?
- Are religious services held at the home?

Services and Fees

- Ask for a copy of all forms requiring signatures so you can review them.
- Is there a Security deposit? Is there an application fee? Is the fee refundable?
- What is included in the basic fee?
- How often are rates increased? Ask for a 5-year history.
- Review services provided and fees for each individual service.
- How much notice is given to the resident regarding eviction or termination of services?
- Under what circumstances can the resident terminate the lease or contract?
- What will happen if medical needs increase so that the level of care is beyond what the home provides?
- What will happen when the resident's funds run out?

Moving In

- What is the process for moving in?
- Is there a needs assessment or initial evaluation done to assure the resident receives appropriate care and services?
- What happens to the resident's room during a temporary hospital admission?
- Ask for Resident Rights information.

Moving Out

- What is the home's policy and procedure for evictions?
- Does the home assist with locating an appropriate care setting?