



DOWN SYNDROME GUILD
OF DALLAS

Choosing an HCS Provider That Meets Your Needs

The first step in choosing a provider is identifying your individual needs and the values that are important to you. Once you have identified these things you are on your way to accessing supports that will help you develop a meaningful life for your family member with Down syndrome.

A list of providers can often be obtained upon request from the Texas Department of Aging and Disability (DADS), but it is up to you to choose which person or agency can best meet your needs. Once you have obtained the list you might want to consider visiting two or three different agencies alone or with someone you trust, asking as many questions as you need to feel informed.

In order to make the most of your visit, think about what is most important to you and develop questions that will get you the information you need to make informed decisions. You will also need to be prepared to express your expectations, goals and what you are willing to do to help. The relationship between you and your provider should be a partnership.

Some questions may include:

- * What experiences have you had in working for people who have disabilities?
- * How many people does your agency serve in supported employment, job development, habilitation, respite, etc?
- * Describe some of the factors you consider when matching an individual to an employer, community group, volunteer position, etc.
- * What is the average length of time in which your employees stay with your agency?
- * Describe the training, if any, which is provided to all employees of your agency.
- * Describe the strategies you or your agency use to match a support person to the consumer.
- * What type of activities does your agency use to better acquaint the consumer with the support provider?
- * Can you explain what strategies you have used to help people develop connections in the community?
- * Can you please explain the strategies your agency uses to develop jobs for people with disabilities?
- * Describe some competitive based employment jobs and community volunteer opportunities that you have helped persons with a disability obtain and the positions they held.
- * How does your agency develop job leads for people?
- * What strategies has your agency used to develop natural supports at a job site?
- * What strategies has your agency used to develop natural supports in the community?

As you prepare for your meeting, you will begin to think of questions that may be more specifically related to your particular needs and values. Don't hesitate to ask any question you have that assist you in making the best decisions for your family! If you feel the need to request a second meeting, make an additional phone call, etc. Take the extra time. There is no timeline but your own for the selection of a provider. It is a good idea to interview at least 2 or 3 providers before you make a decision.

To see survey results on a comparison of several HCS providers in the Dallas area go to the DADS Long Term care Quality Reporting System at: <http://facilityquality.dads.state.tx.us/qrs/public/qrs.do> or contact the DSG to network with other families regarding their experiences with HCS providers.

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