



## Day Habilitation (Day Program) Activities Guidelines

The Division of Developmental Disabilities encourages best practices and engaging activities in day habilitation services (day programs) and offers the following guidance as a starting point for day habilitation service providers in planning and executing comprehensive activities in their programs.

### **General Guidelines:**

Day habilitation service providers should include activities with the following general guidelines in mind. Day habilitation activities should:

- **Be Age-Appropriate**  
The NJ Division of Developmental Disabilities serves adults (21 and over) with developmental disabilities, thus activities should be implemented that are reflective of those activities of interest to and appropriate for adults rather than activities designed and geared for children.
- **Offer Variety & Choice**  
Adults learn best when there are varied opportunities to develop and practice skills and when they can be applied to new settings. Offering a variety of activities assists with engagement, decreases boredom, and provides each individual with the opportunity to identify strengths, abilities, preferences, support needs, etc. This information can lead to additional ideas for activities and identification of a career path or potential job matches for individuals who are not currently employed in the general workforce.
- **Emphasize Community Experiences**  
Both CMS and states are moving away from traditional, facility-based programs to an emphasis on real community experiences for adults with developmental disabilities. The NJ Division of Developmental Disabilities expects that day program providers will have regular opportunities for individuals to experience their communities and have assistance in doing so.
- **Focus on Small Groups and Individual Interactions and Experiences**  
Community outings that involve large groups do not provide an individualized or personalized experience and do not allow for the building of social capital. Designing day programming to ensure that small group and individual experiences take place during the course of the day/week is important in fostering skill development and community involvement.

**Activity Examples:**

The following list is not exhaustive, but is simply to generate ideas on the types of activities that can occur within the above guidelines and assist with the development of positive programming:

**Community Experiences**

*Some of the following community experiences can assist in developing personal interests.*

Shopping – budgeting, money management	Cultural events
Restaurants – q ordering from menus, personal choices, paying the bill	Travel and community safety, use of public transportation
Bowling	Theater, community concerts
Library, Book clubs	Community festivals
Health fairs	Holiday celebrations
Museums	Parks, walking, picnics
Sports/fitness events	Community gardens

**Facility-Based Activities**

Cooking, meal preparation, food safety	Classes on skill development*
Money management	Developing personal interests**
Health, fitness	Current events
Laundry	Telling time
Personal hygiene	Cleaning

**\*Classes on Skill Development Examples**

- Advocacy
- Assertiveness
- Communication
- Choices, decision-making
- Problem-solving
- Boundaries
- Healthy sexuality
- Relationship building

**\*\*Developing Personal Interests Examples**

- Cards and competitive/collaborative games
- Painting, artwork, drawing, constructing models, needlecraft, jewelry design, sculpting, woodworking, scrapbooking, photography
- Theatre, film-making
- Dancing, music, playing instruments, singing
- Horticulture, gardening, terrariums
- Athletics, sports, fitness
- Reading, books, poetry
- Computer and other devices/ technology, social media experience