



Assistance. Advocacy. Answers on Aging.

# Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

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## CAREGIVER ASSISTANCE NEWS

“CARING FOR YOU ... CARING FOR OTHERS”

### Meaningful Activities in Alzheimer’s & Dementia Care

The work we do and the activities we choose for fun tell the world a lot about us. But people with Alzheimer’s disease (AD) lose, little by little over time, the ability to do those things that make them who they are.

Most caregivers focus on those activities the person with AD no longer should do, such as drive, work, go out alone or make important decisions. But, to help maintain good self-esteem, it is also important to help the person with AD continue to engage in meaningful activities and participate in family and community life. To do this, decide what activities he *can* do and help him adjust for abilities that are lost. **Accentuate the positive.**

Activities should **make the best use of a person’s remaining strengths** and skills, and be based on interests and hobbies developed over a lifetime. These include activities like going for

walks or gardening, which you can still enjoy together. Meaningful activities can also reduce the risk of agitation or upsetting behaviors. A person with AD and/or dementia has difficulty planning and choosing activities. In the early stages, just a reminder or a cue may be enough to get him going, and he may be able to carry on from there. To keep activities enjoyable, follow these tips:

- **Establish a routine** that includes a balance of rest and activity.
- **Recognize limitations.** Long trips, three-act plays or a seat in the balcony far from the restroom are going to cause trouble.
- **Adjust the activity** to make it possible for him to participate.

Don’t tell a person with AD about an activity you have planned too far in advance, because this may cause anxiety, not pleasant expectation.



#### Note

Some people with AD get very upset watching violence on TV because they think it is real. Careful TV monitoring is important.

*Article continues  
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## **Finding an Activity**

An activity doesn't have to be something out of the ordinary. Try modifying regular activities of daily life (ADLs) so that the person with dementia can still do them.

Chores such as dusting, sweeping, doing laundry, preparing food and cooking can be satisfying activities. Even bathing, shaving and getting dressed can provide an opportunity for chatting and reminiscing, singing or telling jokes. Making these necessary ADLs enjoyable will probably improve cooperation, so you both can enjoy them.

## **Make Activities More Fun**

- \* Consider ways the care receiver can continue to participate in activities he enjoyed in the past: If he used to play tennis, but can no longer keep score, how about just hitting the ball back and forth? If she enjoyed cooking, why not make a meal together?
- \* Don't be afraid to try something new. As people age, their interests may change. In spite of AD or sometimes because of it, people often discover talents they may not have expressed before, such as painting, collage or even a greater sense of spirituality.
- \* Doing activities or chores that recall a person's work-related past can bring much happiness.
- \* Break an activity down into simple steps.
- \* Choose an activity that can be completed in a relatively short time. The process is more important than the product: It may be just as much fun to make mashed potatoes as a perfect soufflé.
- \* Be generous with praise, do not criticize or correct mistakes, although you may want to lend a hand if some aspect of the activity becomes too difficult or time-consuming.
- \* Don't get upset if she walks away in the middle of



the project. People with AD are easily distracted and fatigued. She may wander back and continue working, or may get involved in something else.

- \* Keep your sense of humor. Alzheimer's is not funny, but amusing things do happen.

Source: *The Comfort of Home for Alzheimer's Disease*

## **Grandparents Corner**

### **January National Eye Care Month**

Thousands of children are treated each year in the emergency room from eye injuries in and around the home. Below is a list of injuries that are the common cause of injury in children age 14 and younger. 90% of all eye injuries and 50 % of all cases of blindness are preventable.

- Toys that are not age appropriate, and or broken toys
- Pens and pencils
- Adhesives
- General household cleaners
- Furniture
- Flatware and table settings
- Non-Cosmetic bleaches
- Cigarettes, Cigars, Pipes, Lighters
- Grooming Products, Cosmetics( hair spray, Make-up)
- Paper and Cardboard Products
- Playing sports without protective eyewear.

More than 12.1 million school-age children, or one in four, have vision impairment. Among preschool-age more than one in 20 has vision problem that causes permanent sight loss if left untreated.

- Myopia (near sightedness)
- Strabismus (crossed eyes)
- Amblyopia ( Lazy Eye)

A child's eye care is important even when they show no signs of eye trouble. A child's eyes should be checked shortly after they are born, before starting school (age 3 or 4) and throughout the school years as needed.



## CAREGIVER ASSISTANCE NEWS

### Taking Care of Yourself— If at First You Don't Succeed, You're in Excellent Company

Julie Andrews was told she wasn't photogenic enough for film. J.K. Rowling's book "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" was rejected by 12 publishers. Decca Records passed on the Beatles, saying "We don't like their sound." Walt Disney was fired by a newspaper editor who said he "lacked imagination."

What makes some people rebound from defeats and go on to greatness while others throw in the towel? Psychologists call it an unshakable belief some people have in their ultimate success. Such people keep trying because they believe they *will* succeed.

Where does such determination come from? In some cases it's inborn optimism, but it can also be acquired by mastering a task or by modeling the behavior of others who have succeeded.

Avoid self-defeating assumptions. If you are fired, don't magnify the rejection and assume you'll never get another job. Don't allow a rejection to derail your dreams. Remember what Henry Ford said: "Whether you think that you can or you can't, you're usually right."

*Source: April 29, 2008 Wall Street Journal*

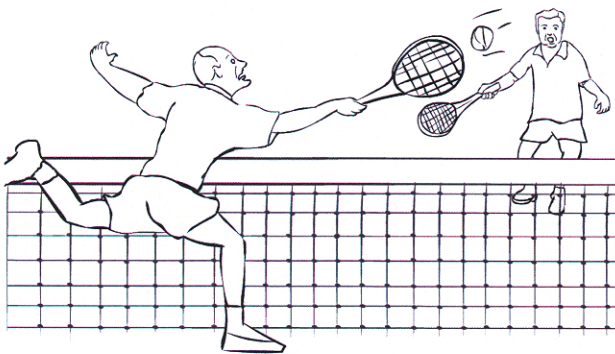
#### **Inspiration**

*The art of being wise is the art of knowing  
what to overlook.*

*~William James*

### Live Life Laughing!

*Look good or not, I am going  
to keep doing this.*



#### **TIP**

Some people enjoy making simple pottery out of clay or homemade flour dough. Try cutting shapes from the dough with cookie cutters. Stamps made with a stamp pad produce instant art, and can be an enjoyable repetitive activity. Keep in mind the capabilities of the person in your care and offer gentle encouragement.

*Source: The Comfort of Home for Alzheimer's Disease*

For information about Ohio Medicaid programs or to report suspected Medical fraud, you may call the Ohio Medicaid Fraud Hotline at 1-800-324-8680.

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<b>AD Limitations and Tips</b>	
<b>Problem</b>	<b>Tip</b>
Poor memory	Focus on the present. "Today is a sunny day," rather than "Do you remember that winter snowstorm?"
Talking about the past	Use this opportunity to learn about the past (as the person currently remembers it).
Difficulty with orientation to time and place	Provide cues such as pictures of a toilet on the bathroom door or a spoon glued to the kitchen door to help the person find his way around the house.
Doesn't understand what to do	Simplify the instructions and speak slowly. Show what is to be done.
Not paying attention	Perhaps he is tired, or the activity is not interesting, too difficult, or confusing; try at a later time.
The job does not get done	Do not focus on the product. Keep reminding yourself it is not important.
The person with AD does it wrong	Keep your sense of humor!

The Ombudsman program can handle your concerns about areas such as elder abuse, client care, consumer rights, etc. For more information, call 1-800-582-7277.

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