

Arranging for services: What should be my expectation of an in-home caregiver?

Talking openly and honestly about your loved one's preferences and expectations is important to the development of a healthy and long-term relationship with an in-home caregiver.

Placing tasks in writing is not only a wise practice, but also the only way to ensure that expectations are communicated.

Discussing with the caregiver and the agency what expectations are being met, which are being exceeded and which areas require improvement is a necessary part of arranging for such assistance.

Paid caregivers are only capable of completing a certain amount of tasks. The more personal companionship an older adult and their family requests or requires, the less time is available for completing tasks. Seek a blend between completing tasks and having time for personal interaction. If all you need is a housekeeper or yard worker, perhaps you would be better served by arranging for services through this type of agency instead of an in-home care agency. In-home care offers a blending of chore work with companionship.

If an older adult has memory loss, more time is likely required by a caregiver to complete tasks and to have a meaningful interaction with an older adult. When memory loss is involved, the older adult can't feel rushed - they have to feel involved, even if it means asking their permission to do certain tasks; or even if it means simply reminiscing a bit before taking a bath or changing clothes. People with dementia don't respond well to fast-moving, task focused people. They respond much better and are much more compliant with receiving help with hygiene and personal care if the caregiver is allotted enough time to be patient and can involve the older adult in the process in some way.

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