

Lunch Program Update

McConnell Place West - Edmonton, AB



The Lunch Program was originally started by a group of speech-language pathology master's students at McConnell Place West in Edmonton, AB. Due to the positive response, both by residents and program facilitators, the program has grown

and is now taking place at two locations: McConnell Place West and McConnell Place North. Both of these facilities are similar in their set-up and operation. Both locations are made up of 3 'houses' of 12 residents each.

The Recreation Therapy Assistant (RTA) at McConnell Place West has modified the program so that she can run it herself. Every three months, the program participants change and are selected by the RTA. The RTA selects 2 people from each house to join the Lunch Club. Residents have to be physically able to join in and help with activities involved in preparation for the lunch. Once selected, group members get together once a week on Thursdays, from 11am—1pm.

Every Wednesday, the group meets to discuss what they would like to eat the next day. This way, if it requires special ingredients (e.g. pyrogies and sausage), the groceries can

be purchased the evening before. If more preparation time is needed than the Lunch Club would provide, the RTA holds a baking club on Thursday morning with the group to prepare an element of the meal, such as the dessert.



Lunch Club Itinerary

1. Recreation Therapy Assistant (RTA) greets each member as they come in and gives each of them his/her name tag.
2. RTA introduces the topic of coffee, makes it, and they discuss the smell of coffee, what it reminds them of, etc.
3. They all have a cup of coffee and they introduce themselves to each other.
4. RTA then directs the conversation to what they are going to be eating and what needs to be done.
5. Each member volunteers to do something (e.g. open the soup and cook it).
6. RTA's main role is to observe and redirect. She will help if needed, but usually a member will volunteer to assist another if they are having trouble.
7. RTA prompts them as they work. She asks them to name the things they are using (e.g. ingredients, tools, etc.).
8. Laminated name tags have been placed on the cupboards, fridge, stove to name the appliances, but also what would be found inside. E.g. a tag with the word 'milk' and showing a picture of a carton of milk.
9. The residents set the table, pour the juice, etc.
10. When the food is ready, it is served out in equal portions. Residents pass around the food.
11. Coffee is served again with dessert.
12. They engage in about 20 minutes of conversation while they eat. They start by discussing the meal, but the conversation changes every 5 minutes or so.
13. Residents volunteer for the various clean up jobs (clearing, dishes, etc).



The Lunch Club has developed with a clear process to follow, so it can easily be replicated in other facilities. (See the steps outlined in the sidebar.)

To maintain the skills residents learn and develop in this program, they are encouraged on an ongoing basis to set the tables, pour the drinks, carry their own food to the tables, do dishes, fold laundry and perform other routine tasks of daily living.

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One of the tasks that the RTA is responsible for is ensuring that the other staff understand the importance of encouraging residents to do these tasks on their own. It is very important that all staff be onboard with this project and follow a few basic rules, which are designed to allow residents to learn and participate in the club. Staff are discouraged from taking the easy way out and doing the tasks themselves to avoid having to supervise and coach residents through the tasks. This ensures the residents will have an opportunity to develop skills and retain what they learn. This also provides residents a sense of inclusion and helps them residents to develop lasting relationships with other residents as they help each other to complete tasks.

