

OASIS · AT A GLANCE

Group Homes, Supported Living, Shared Living, Intentional Communities

Four housing models compared on the four variables that actually matter: autonomy, staffing, cost structure, and who controls the lease. Plus the tour-day questions that separate brochure language from operational reality.

BY JIM PALASTY · OASIS FOR AUTISM · 10 MIN READ

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HOUSING MODELS

Group home, supported living, shared living, intentional community. Each is a tradeoff between autonomy, supervision, cost, and tenure security.

How it works

THREE STEPS

The four models

Group home, supported living, shared living, intentional community. Define what each one actually means in your state.



Four variables

Autonomy. Staffing. Cost structure. Who controls the lease. Score each model against each variable for your specific adult.



Ask the right questions

Brochure language is universal. Operational reality is local. The tour-day question list is how you tell the difference.

Model comparison at a glance

Group home	24/7 staff, shared, provider lease, highest support
Supported living	Scheduled staff hours, individual lease, highest autonomy of the supported options
Shared living	Host family in their home, paid through waiver, family-style
Intentional community	Planned mixed community, often nonprofit-run, variable lease
Self-direction	Adult hires own staff into their own home; not a separate model
Family home	Adult lives with family, waiver pays for in-home support hours
ICF/IID	Institutional, decreasing nationally, not community-based

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

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We toured five group homes. Four of them had the same brochure. One of them had the same staff member working three shifts in a row when we arrived. She told us, in front of her manager, that the home had not had a stable overnight in eight months. That tour took thirty minutes. We left with the answer to a question the brochure could not have answered. Our son moved into the fifth home four months later.

ANTHONY, ROYAL OAK

What matters, at a glance

Who controls the lease

The single most important question. If the provider holds the lease, eviction is at the provider's discretion. If the adult holds the lease, tenancy is protected. The model name does not always reveal the answer.

Group home

Provider-owned or leased. Staff on-site 24/7. Shared bedrooms or private rooms. Highest supervision, lowest autonomy, lowest privacy. Lease held by the provider.

Supported living

Adult holds the lease. Staff comes in for scheduled hours. More privacy, more autonomy, more responsibility. Tenancy protected under standard housing law.

Intentional community

Planned community of adults with disabilities and (often) non-disabled residents and staff. Higher cost, longer waitlists, strong community ethos. Lease control varies by community.

Shared living / host home

Adult lives with a paid host family in the host's home. Family-style supervision. Lower cost than group home. The match is everything; a bad match is a bad outcome.

HCBS Settings Rule applies

Federal HCBS Settings Rule requires Medicaid-funded residential settings to honor specific rights: lockable bedroom, food access, visitor schedule, community integration. All four models must comply.

BRING THESE · CHECK AS YOU GO

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Lease holder confirmed in writing | ☐ Eviction / discharge policy reviewed |
| ☐ Staff turnover rate provided | ☐ Behavioral incident protocol reviewed |
| ☐ HCBS Settings Rule attestation seen | ☐ References from at least two current resident families |
| ☐ Trial overnight or weekend offered | |

YOUR MOVE

Tour-day question list

- 1 Who holds the lease, and what is the eviction process if it exists?
- 2 What is the staff turnover rate, and what is the current overnight staff stability?
- 3 What is the daily routine for a resident with sensory needs similar to my adult?
- 4 How does the home handle behavioral incidents, and what is the de-escalation protocol in writing?
- 5 What is the HCBS Settings Rule compliance status, and can I see the lockable-bedroom and food-access policies?

The brochure is universal. The home is local. The tour-day questions are the difference.

RESOURCES NAMED IN THIS POST

oasisforautism.com · <https://oasisforautism.com>

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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