

My Parents Need to Move - Where Do We Start?

A 10-Step Family Checklist | Downsizing with Dignity™

When a parent needs to leave a long-time home, families often feel as though everything has to be decided at once. It does not.

This checklist is designed to help you slow the process down, organize the decisions and take one manageable step at a time.

You do not need to have all the answers before you begin.

1. Start With the Conversation

Talk with your parent about how they are feeling in their current home and what they want the next chapter to look like.

Listen before trying to solve everything. The goal is to understand their priorities, concerns and wishes.

- ☐ What is becoming difficult about the current home?
- ☐ What would make daily life easier?
- ☐ Is the move urgent, or do you have time to plan?
- ☐ Who should be involved in future decisions?

2. Understand the Next Living Option

Before making major decisions about the current house, begin exploring where your parent may want or need to live next.

- ☐ Smaller house or bungalow
- ☐ Condominium or apartment
- ☐ Adult lifestyle community
- ☐ Retirement residence
- ☐ Supportive living
- ☐ Moving closer to family

3. Create a Realistic Timeline

A timeline helps turn an overwhelming move into smaller decisions.

- ☐ Target move date
- ☐ When housing decisions need to be made

- ☐ When sorting and decluttering will begin
- ☐ When the home should be evaluated
- ☐ When repairs or preparation should happen
- ☐ When the property may be listed for sale

4. Understand the Financial Picture

Before committing to the next home, understand the costs and resources involved.

- ☐ Estimated value of the current home
- ☐ Mortgage or other obligations
- ☐ Monthly cost of the new living arrangement
- ☐ Moving and transition costs
- ☐ Potential repair or preparation expenses
- ☐ Professional financial, legal or tax advice where appropriate

5. Evaluate the Current Home Before Renovating

Do not assume the house needs a major renovation before it can be sold.

Have the property reviewed first so you can understand what buyers are likely to value and which improvements may not provide a worthwhile return.

- ☐ Necessary repairs
- ☐ Cleaning and decluttering
- ☐ Painting or simple cosmetic updates
- ☐ Safety issues
- ☐ Staging or presentation
- ☐ Whether selling as-is should be considered

6. Begin Sorting Belongings

Sorting through decades of belongings can be emotionally exhausting. Start early and work in small areas rather than trying to empty the entire home at once.

- ☐ KEEP - moving to the new home
- ☐ FAMILY - gifting to children or grandchildren
- ☐ SELL - items with resale value
- ☐ DONATE - items that can help someone else
- ☐ RECYCLE - appropriate materials
- ☐ DISPOSE - items that cannot be reused

7. Decide Whether to Move First or Sell First

There is no single correct sequence.

For some families, the home needs to sell before the move. For others, settling Mom or Dad into the new residence first creates a much calmer experience.

- ☐ Financial needs
- ☐ Availability of the new residence
- ☐ Health and mobility
- ☐ Stress created by showings
- ☐ Amount of work required in the current home
- ☐ Family availability to help

8. Build Your Support Team

You do not have to personally manage every part of the transition.

- ☐ Seniors Real Estate Specialist®
- ☐ Mover
- ☐ Professional organizer or downsizing specialist
- ☐ Cleaner
- ☐ Handyman or contractor
- ☐ Estate sale or auction service
- ☐ Donation and removal services
- ☐ Lawyer
- ☐ Financial or tax professional
- ☐ Senior-living professionals

9. Prepare and Market the Home

Once the timing is right, create a focused plan for preparing and selling the property.

- ☐ Final decluttering
- ☐ Cleaning
- ☐ Necessary repairs
- ☐ Staging or furniture placement
- ☐ Professional photography
- ☐ Pricing strategy
- ☐ Marketing plan
- ☐ Showings

- ❑ Offer review and negotiation
- ❑ Closing preparation

10. Help Your Parent Settle Into the Next Chapter

The transition does not end when the house is sold.

Give your parent time to adjust to the new surroundings, routines and community. Familiar furniture, photographs and meaningful belongings can help the new space feel like home.

- ❑ Set up important rooms first
- ❑ Bring familiar and meaningful belongings
- ❑ Update addresses and services
- ❑ Introduce new routines gradually
- ❑ Keep family visits and communication consistent
- ❑ Celebrate the new chapter

A Helpful Reminder

You do not need to complete all ten steps immediately. The most important thing is to begin before the move becomes a crisis, whenever possible.

Planning early gives your parent more choices, gives your family more time and helps everyone make decisions with less pressure.

Need Help Creating the Plan?

If you are helping a parent downsize, move into retirement living or prepare a long-time family home for sale in Durham Region or Northumberland County, I would be happy to help you understand the next steps.

We can begin with a conversation. There is no pressure to list the home before your family is ready.

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