

Moving an Aging Parent to Assisted Living

A step-by-step family checklist for the move into assisted living, independent living, or a retirement community. Check off each item as you go.

1. Start the conversation

2–6 months before

- ☐ Talk early and often. Frame it around safety, comfort and independence rather than loss.
- ☐ Include your parent in every decision they are able to make.
- ☐ Bring siblings and key family members onto the same page; agree on who handles what.
- ☐ Ask their doctor for input on the level of care that fits now and in the next few years.
- ☐ Note what matters most to your parent: location, church, friends, pets, activities, meals.

2. Choose the right community

2–4 months before

- ☐ Decide on the care level: independent living, assisted living, memory care, or continuing care.
- ☐ Set a monthly budget and review how care will be paid for (savings, long-term care insurance, VA benefits, home sale).
- ☐ Tour 2–3 communities, ideally at mealtime. Visit again unannounced if you can.
- ☐ Ask about staffing, extra fees, what happens if care needs change, and move-in rules.
- ☐ Get the apartment's floor plan and exact room measurements.
- ☐ Review the residency agreement carefully before signing; consider having an attorney look at it.

3. Paperwork & legal

6–8 weeks before

- ☐ Confirm power of attorney (financial) and a healthcare proxy / advance directive are in place.
- ☐ Gather ID, Medicare and insurance cards, prescriptions list and doctor contacts.
- ☐ Complete the community's medical assessment and any required physician forms.
- ☐ Plan for the current home: sell, rent, or keep. Talk to a real estate agent early if selling.
- ☐ Put important documents in one labeled folder that travels with the family, not the movers.

4. Downsize with care

4–8 weeks before

- ☐ Use the floor plan to decide which furniture fits. Measure beds, chairs and dressers.
- ☐ Work one room at a time, in short sessions. Start with rooms that are least emotional.
- ☐ Sort into four groups: Keep, Give to family, Donate, Discard.
- ☐ Let your parent choose the keepsakes, photos and art that make a room feel like home.
- ☐ Offer family heirlooms to relatives and set a pickup deadline.
- ☐ Plan an estate sale, consignment, or cleanout for what remains.

5. Get ready to move

2–4 weeks before

- ☐ Book the move date with the community and confirm elevator/loading-dock times.
- ☐ Hire movers who specialize in senior moves; ask about packing, setup and unpacking.
- ☐ Forward mail (USPS) and update the address with Social Security, banks, pharmacy and insurers.
- ☐ Schedule transfer or shut-off of utilities, phone, internet, cable and newspaper.
- ☐ Arrange a pharmacy that delivers to the community, if needed.
- ☐ Pack a first-week bag: medications, glasses, hearing aids, chargers, clothes, toiletries, and important papers.

6. Moving day

Move week

- ☐ Keep your parent away from the busiest part of the move, with a family member or friend.
- ☐ Set up the bed, favorite chair, lamps, photos and familiar bedding first.
- ☐ Hang pictures and place things where they were at home when possible (nightstand, clock, remote).
- ☐ Check that phone, TV and call system work before the day ends.
- ☐ Introduce your parent to staff and neighbors; get the activity calendar.

7. Settling in

First 30–60 days

- ☐ Visit often at first, then ease into a regular routine.
- ☐ Encourage one or two activities or a regular dining table the first week.
- ☐ Expect an adjustment period. Share concerns with the care team early.
- ☐ Follow up on anything left at the old home: cleanout, repairs, listing, final bills.

Key contacts & move details

Keep this page with your parent's important papers.

New community & apartment #	
Community move-in coordinator	
Move date & elevator time	
Primary doctor	
Pharmacy	
Power of attorney / healthcare proxy	
Family point person	
Moving company	
Real estate agent	
Notes	

Want help with any of this?

Gentle Transitions Relocation helps Richmond-area families with downsizing, packing, the move itself, and setting up the new home. Call **(804) 446-1356** or visit **www.rvaseniormovers.com** for a free, no-obligation consultation.