

START WITH THE NEXT STEP

The Family Care Starter Pack

Ten practical guides, one calm place to begin. For adult children helping an ageing parent in Ontario.

You do not have to solve everything today.

Start with the one-page plan on the next page. Then open the guide that fits the question in front of you. Print only what you need; the complete pack stays here when you need the next piece.

In this pack	How it helps
Home care: four guides	Name the tasks, ask useful questions and compare providers.
Residence & medical alert comparisons	Keep the person's priorities beside the costs and terms.
Legal documents & funeral planning	Locate the records and record wishes before a decision is rushed.
Home safety & elder abuse concerns	Notice concerns and find the appropriate help.
A next-steps page & Ontario contacts	Choose one action and know where to call.

Free to download. No email required. All ten guides are also available individually at thevettedsenior.com/resources.

A SMALL BEGINNING

Our family's next steps.

Ask your parent what matters to them and who they want involved. For an emergency, call 911; this plan can wait.

What has changed, and when?

What matters most to my parent right now?

The next three things to arrange / who has agreed to help

What is still uncertain / who can answer?

When will we check in again?

KEEP THIS PAGE HANDY

Ontario help, at a glance.

Start with the service that fits the question. These contacts do not require a TVS purchase.

Immediate danger / medical emergency | 911

Do not wait for a checklist or a callback.

Health811 | 811

Ontario nurse advice, day or night. Not an emergency response service.

Ontario Health atHome | 310-2222

Home-care assessment and care coordination. No area code in Ontario.

Community services | 211

Ask about meals, transport, local support and other community programs.

Ontario Caregiver Helpline | 1-833-416-2273

Support finding caregiver resources. Available by phone 24/7; not a crisis line.

Seniors Safety Line | 1-866-299-1011

Ontario support for abuse or neglect concerns, 24/7.

Suicide Crisis Helpline | Call or text 988

If you or someone you know is thinking about suicide. Available 24/7 in Canada.

Contacts checked September 26, 2026. See the source links in this pack for current details. Your care team's individual instructions take priority.

01 / SUPPORT TASKS PLANNER

Personal care & mobility

Mark what needs a conversation. A checked task does not decide who is qualified to do it or how much care is required.

- ☐ Bathing, showering, hair care and oral hygiene
- ☐ Dressing, grooming and choosing clothing
- ☐ Applying creams or compression garments as directed
- ☐ Help using the toilet or managing continence
- ☐ Catheter or ostomy care: ask the care team about scope and training
- ☐ Getting in and out of bed, a chair or a vehicle
- ☐ Repositioning safely, following an individual care plan
- ☐ Using a walker, cane, rollator or wheelchair
- ☐ Stairs, standing up, sitting down and supported outings

When is help needed, and what is already confirmed?

01 / SUPPORT TASKS PLANNER

Meals & medication support

Mark what needs a conversation. A checked task does not decide who is qualified to do it or how much care is required.

- ☐ Planning meals, preparing food and shopping
- ☐ Following diet or texture instructions from the care team
- ☐ Help eating or drinking: ask about safe methods and training
- ☐ Checking food storage and expiry dates
- ☐ Medication reminders at the agreed times
- ☐ Pharmacy pickup and an up-to-date medication list
- ☐ Ask the pharmacist about packaging and a safe routine
- ☐ Recording medication support as directed; reporting concerns
- ☐ Medication administration, injections or wound care: confirm the authorised worker and care plan

When is help needed, and what is already confirmed?

01 / SUPPORT TASKS PLANNER

Home, company & the everyday

Mark what needs a conversation. A checked task does not decide who is qualified to do it or how much care is required.

- ☐ Light cleaning, laundry, bed linen and tidying
- ☐ Garbage, recycling, plants and pet care
- ☐ Answering the door, managing mail and arranging errands
- ☐ Help organising bills: permission and financial safeguards needed
- ☐ Companionship, reading, hobbies and conversation
- ☐ Accompaniment to appointments, social or faith activities
- ☐ Help with phone and video calls
- ☐ Noticing and reporting changes in wellbeing
- ☐ Respite that gives the family caregiver a break

When is help needed, and what is already confirmed?

01 / SUPPORT TASKS PLANNER

Describe the support clearly.

Bring this page to the care coordinator or provider. Include your parent's priorities and ask about uncovered needs.

What matters most to the person receiving help?

Tasks, frequency and times help is needed

Location, language, cultural or other preferences

Care-team instructions / training to confirm

What family can realistically provide / what remains uncovered

02 / QUESTIONS FOR PROVIDERS

People & accountability

Ask each provider the same questions. Request documents you can review calmly. Membership or accreditation is not a guarantee of safe care.

What business and professional registrations apply to your service? How can we check them?

What insurance and workplace coverage do you carry? Can we see confirmation?

Who employs or contracts the workers, and who handles payroll and employment obligations?

What background checks, relevant training and supervision are provided?

Who is accountable for the care plan and for investigating a concern?

02 / QUESTIONS FOR PROVIDERS

The service & its real cost

Ask each provider the same questions. Request documents you can review calmly. Membership or accreditation is not a guarantee of safe care.

Which tasks can you provide, and which require another qualified worker?

Can support change as needs change? Can you work in the person's current residence?

What is the minimum billed time per visit or week?

What extra charges apply: travel, evenings, holidays, assessment, administration and tax?

Will you give us a written quote and agreement showing cancellation and refund terms?

02 / QUESTIONS FOR PROVIDERS

Reliability & fit

Ask each provider the same questions. Request documents you can review calmly. Membership or accreditation is not a guarantee of safe care.

When can the agreed service actually begin? What remains unconfirmed?

Will we have a consistent worker? Can we meet them and request a change?

What happens if a worker misses a visit? Who arranges and pays for backup?

Who can we reach after hours, and what should go directly to emergency services?

How do we raise concerns? Can we speak to references who have agreed to be contacted?

03 / COMPARE HOME CARE PROVIDERS

People & services

Write “unknown” until you have an answer. Compare the same tasks and schedule. A low price or a full column is not a quality or suitability score.

Ask / confirm	Provider A	Provider B	Provider C
Name / phone / quote date			
Applicable registrations checked			
Insurance evidence / checked date			
Employee or contractor arrangement			
Screening / training / supervision			
Tasks offered and excluded			
Consistency / backup arrangements			
After-hours contact / references			

What matters most to your parent / what needs follow-up?

03 / COMPARE HOME CARE PROVIDERS

Costs & the decision

Write “unknown” until you have an answer. Compare the same tasks and schedule. A low price or a full column is not a quality or suitability score.

Ask / confirm	Provider A	Provider B	Provider C
Start date confirmed?			
Hourly or package rate (CAD)			
Minimum billed hours / visit			
Evening / weekend / travel charges			
Assessment / other one-time fees			
Tax included?			
Cancellation notice / fees			
Agreement received and reviewed			

What matters most to your parent / what needs follow-up?

04 / CARE TYPE CONVERSATION GUIDE

What kind of help fits?

Use tasks as the starting point for a care assessment. More than one type of support may be needed; do not choose by counting checkmarks.

Companionship & practical help

Company, shopping, errands, light housekeeping, meals and accompaniment may fit here. Ask what the provider can safely do and what training is required.

Personal support

Bathing, dressing, toileting, eating and moving safely may need a personal support worker and an individual care plan. Describe the task, rather than assuming the job title covers it.

Nursing & therapy

Ask the care team about clinical assessment, wounds, injections, catheter care, rehabilitation and medication support. Responsibility can depend on the task, setting, delegation, training and the person's needs.

Respite

Respite describes relief for the caregiver. It can be provided through different services; match the arrangement to the person's support and supervision needs.

Ontario nursing titles include RN and RPN. Verify professional registration where it applies. A family worksheet cannot authorise a worker to perform a task.

04 / CARE TYPE CONVERSATION GUIDE

Bring a concrete description.

Use the Support Tasks Planner for a longer inventory. Ask Ontario Health atHome about an assessment: 310-2222.

Tasks the person wants help with

Timing / frequency / location

What they currently manage independently

What changed, and when

Questions about the right worker, training or equipment

05 / RESIDENCE TOUR CHECKLIST

Look beyond the lobby.

Take a copy on each visit. Include your parent's priorities. Arrange visits in line with the home's visitor and infection-control policies.

Before you go

- ☐ Ask for base rates, care packages and extra charges in writing.
- ☐ Confirm which needs the residence can and cannot support.
- ☐ Check the Ontario RHRA public register and inspection information.
- ☐ Ask to see a normal meal or activity, where available.
- ☐ Write down the three things that matter most to your parent.

During the visit

- ☐ How do staff speak to residents and answer your parent directly?
- ☐ Are people offered choices, privacy and help when they ask?
- ☐ Look at everyday shared spaces, access routes and bathrooms.
- ☐ Ask about current activities and how a person can participate.
- ☐ Observe meals, pace, assistance and dietary choices.

What did your parent notice? What needs a second visit?

05 / RESIDENCE TOUR CHECKLIST

Ask about life as needs change.

The written agreement, service capacity and fit matter more than a tour score.

What is included, what costs extra, and how have rates changed?

Who is on site overnight, and what care can they provide?

What happens if needs exceed the residence's services?

Trial stays, waitlist deposits, refunds and notice periods?

How are complaints and resident concerns handled?

05 / RESIDENCE TOUR CHECKLIST

Compare the whole picture.

Add the care your parent needs to the housing price. Obtain current written estimates.

Compare	Residence A	Residence B	Residence C
Name / visit date			
Base monthly cost			
Care and other extras			
Estimated total / tax			
Needs they cannot meet			
Parent's priorities met?			
Agreement questions			
Next visit / follow-up			

Parent's preferred option and reasons / what remains unresolved

06 / MEDICAL ALERT COMPARISON

Choose with the person wearing it.

Ask for written answers and test the equipment as instructed. Fall detection is not guaranteed and an alert device is not a substitute for needed care.

Question	A	B	C
24/7 monitoring? Where, and in which languages?			
Who is called when the button is pressed?			
Fall detection included? Limitations / extra cost?			
Equipment, activation and monthly total?			
Contract term, cancellation and return policy?			
Battery, power or signal failure: who is alerted?			
Home range / mobile coverage / GPS?			
Can it be worn in the shower? Exact rating?			
Second user cost?			
Trial period and test procedure?			

06 / MEDICAL ALERT COMPARISON

Will it work in everyday life?

The wearer's preferences, reach, dexterity and routine belong in the decision.

- ☐ The person has seen the device and is willing to use it.
- ☐ The pendant, wristband or other style fits their preferences.
- ☐ Reception and range will be checked where it will be used.
- ☐ The charging and testing routine has an owner and a backup.
- ☐ Contacts agree to their role and know how responders gain access.
- ☐ We have asked 211 about local subsidy programs.
- ☐ We have kept receipts and will check any tax claim with a qualified adviser.

Chosen model / total cost / written terms location

Questions to resolve before committing

07 / LEGAL DOCUMENTS CHECKLIST

Know what exists and where.

This is a document locator, not a legal-validity test. Ontario uses different rules for wills, property decisions, personal care and treatment consent. Ask a lawyer about your circumstances.

Document / record	Exists?	Location known?	Review needed?
Will / estate trustee details			
Continuing power of attorney for property			
Power of attorney for personal care			
Wishes and advance care conversations			
Personal inventory / professional contacts			

- ☐ Named people know about their role and can still carry it out.
- ☐ Ask about alternates and how joint decision arrangements work.
- ☐ Review after major changes, a move, or a concern about the documents.
- ☐ Know how authorised people can obtain the originals.

07 / LEGAL DOCUMENTS CHECKLIST

Make the documents findable.

Record locations and professional contacts, not account numbers or passwords. A diagnosis alone does not settle capacity for every decision.

Will / estate trustee / contact

Property power of attorney / named person / location

Personal care power of attorney / named person / location

Lawyer / phone / review date

Care wishes / people who have discussed them

Ontario guidance: ontario.ca/page/make-power-attorney. For treatment decisions and advance care planning: advancecareplanningontario.ca.

08 / FUNERAL PRE-PLANNING

Record the wishes first.

A conversation about wishes does not require a purchase. Record preferences gently, including what the person would rather leave undecided.

Burial, cremation or donation: preference / questions

Service, venue, faith or cultural traditions

People, music, readings and stories that matter

Resting place / existing plot or arrangements

Obituary wishes / what not to spend money on

08 / FUNERAL PRE-PLANNING

Compare before prepaying.

Check the provider’s licence with the Bereavement Authority of Ontario and read its consumer guide before signing. thebao.ca

Ask the provider	Provider A	Provider B
Itemised price list; required versus optional items?		
All-in price for the chosen arrangements?		
Who holds prepaid funds: trust or insurance?		
Which prices are guaranteed, and which can change?		
Transfer, cancellation and refund terms?		
Provider ownership and licensed establishment?		

Contract / receipts / cemetery deed location

Estate trustee / people to notify / this worksheet location

09 / SEASONAL HOME SAFETY

Walk through together.

Use this to notice tasks, then ask the relevant professional about safe changes. Equipment and home adaptations should suit the person, the home and applicable requirements.

- ☐ Test smoke and carbon monoxide alarms; follow replacement and battery instructions.
- ☐ Clear and light the route from bed to bathroom.
- ☐ Check loose rugs, cords, clutter and trip edges.
- ☐ Check steps and handrails; arrange repairs where needed.
- ☐ Ask about properly installed grab bars and suitable bathroom equipment.
- ☐ Ask a qualified professional about safe hot-water delivery and scald prevention; do not change tank settings from this checklist.
- ☐ Service heating and filters according to the equipment instructions.
- ☐ Return unused or expired medication to a pharmacy for advice on disposal.

Top three concerns / professional advice needed

09 / SEASONAL HOME SAFETY

Make a plan for the season.

Assign work only to someone who can do it safely. Ask contractors about the insurance, training and coverage applicable to the work.

Before cold weather

- ☐ Confirm snow and ice removal; store grit where it can be reached.
- ☐ Arrange safe gutter, drainage, outdoor tap and heating maintenance.
- ☐ Check entrance lighting, outdoor steps and handrails.

Before warm weather

- ☐ Inspect paths and porches from a safe position; arrange repairs.
- ☐ Arrange dryer-vent cleaning and check windows and screens.
- ☐ Test cooling and agree a plan for very hot days.

Task	Owner / quote	Due / confirmed

10 / SAFETY & PROTECTION

When something feels wrong.

You do not need to prove abuse before asking for help. These observations can have different causes; a checklist cannot establish a diagnosis or determine that abuse occurred.

Immediate danger

Call 911. Do not delay urgent help to fill in a form or organise alternative care.

Concern about abuse or neglect

Call the Ontario Seniors Safety Line: 1-866-299-1011. It supports older adults and people concerned about them, 24/7.

Listen and document safely

Record dates, what you saw or heard, and who was present. Use the person's own words where possible. Do not confront someone if doing so may increase danger.

Protect the person's choices

Ask privately what they want where it is safe to do so. A helpline can help plan next steps, including safe support if the person they fear also provides care.

A concern in a care home

Contact the relevant regulator or care-home reporting channel promptly. Reporting duties can apply; use current official guidance, not a promise that every report can be anonymous.

10 / SAFETY & PROTECTION

Physical signs

Note what changed and when. A sign is a reason to seek advice, not proof by itself.

- ☐ Unexplained bruises, cuts, burns, or welts
- ☐ Bruises in unusual locations: upper arms, torso, face, or inner thighs
- ☐ Injuries at different stages of healing at the same time
- ☐ An injury is inconsistently or implausibly explained
- ☐ Signs of being restrained: rope marks or bruising on wrists or ankles
- ☐ Head injuries or patches of hair loss
- ☐ Broken bones, especially repeated fractures
- ☐ Bite marks or signs of rough handling
- ☐ The caregiver insists on being present during all medical exams
- ☐ There are delays in seeking medical care for injuries
- ☐ The person flinches, pulls away, or seems afraid of touch
- ☐ The caregiver speaks for the person and prevents them from speaking
- ☐ Medical records show frequent emergency visits for unexplained accidents
- ☐ The person appears heavily sedated or unusually drowsy without clear medical cause
- ☐ The person's account of how an injury happened changes from one telling to the next

Date / what happened / who was present

10 / SAFETY & PROTECTION

Emotional & behavioural signs

Note what changed and when. A sign is a reason to seek advice, not proof by itself.

- ☐ Withdrawal, fearfulness, or unusual anxiety that is new or increasing
- ☐ Sudden changes in mood, personality, or behaviour
- ☐ Reluctance to speak freely, especially when a specific person is present
- ☐ Expressions of shame, worthlessness, or hopelessness
- ☐ Reports of being yelled at, threatened, humiliated, or controlled
- ☐ Reluctance to discuss personal, financial, or daily life matters
- ☐ Disinterest in activities, hobbies, or people they previously enjoyed
- ☐ Avoidance of eye contact when a particular person is nearby
- ☐ Excessive deference or agreement with a specific caregiver or person
- ☐ Marked anxiety when the caregiver is mentioned or enters the room
- ☐ Statements such as 'I deserve this' or 'I am a burden to everyone'
- ☐ Sleep disturbances, nightmares, or new fearfulness at night
- ☐ Sudden withdrawal from contact with family or friends
- ☐ Refusal of visits from people they previously enjoyed seeing
- ☐ Signs of depression: flat affect, tearfulness, prolonged withdrawal
- ☐ New confusion or disorientation without a clear medical explanation

Date / what happened / who was present

10 / SAFETY & PROTECTION

Financial signs

Note what changed and when. A sign is a reason to seek advice, not proof by itself.

- ☐ Unexplained or large withdrawals from bank accounts
- ☐ Transfers of money to unfamiliar individuals or accounts
- ☐ Bills unpaid or services disconnected despite adequate income or savings
- ☐ Sudden or unexplained changes to a will, trust, or beneficiary designations
- ☐ A new power of attorney signed under unclear or pressured circumstances
- ☐ Missing cash, jewellery, valuables, or personal possessions
- ☐ Credit cards used without the person's knowledge or consent
- ☐ Unfamiliar signatures on financial, legal, or property documents
- ☐ New acquaintances with unusual or intrusive interest in the person's finances
- ☐ A caregiver or family member controls all mail, phone access, and financial documents
- ☐ The person is unaware of their own financial situation or account balances
- ☐ Unexplained loans or financial commitments the person cannot explain
- ☐ Sudden purchase of items the person did not want or did not choose
- ☐ Property titles or vehicles transferred without a clear or voluntary reason
- ☐ The person is asked to sign documents they cannot read or properly understand

Date / what happened / who was present

10 / SAFETY & PROTECTION

Neglect & unmet needs

Note what changed and when. A sign is a reason to seek advice, not proof by itself.

- ☐ Poor hygiene, unwashed clothing, or persistent body odour
- ☐ Malnutrition or significant unexplained weight loss
- ☐ Dehydration without a clear medical explanation
- ☐ Medications not being given, tracked, or managed correctly
- ☐ Pressure sores or bedsores from being left in one position too long
- ☐ Untreated medical conditions, wounds, or infections
- ☐ Living space that is unsafe, cold, dirty, or in serious disrepair
- ☐ Insufficient food in the home for the person's needs
- ☐ Necessary aids missing: glasses, hearing aids, dentures, or mobility devices
- ☐ The caregiver is consistently unavailable, absent, or unreachable when needed
- ☐ The caregiver openly expresses resentment, frustration, or hostility toward the person
- ☐ The caregiver appears impaired, unwell, or unable to provide appropriate care
- ☐ The person is left alone for long periods without check-ins or emergency access
- ☐ Medical appointments are being consistently missed or cancelled
- ☐ The home is excessively cluttered or presents a clear fall or fire hazard
- ☐ The person has no access to outside contact, visitors, or community

Date / what happened / who was present

10 / SAFETY & PROTECTION

Fraud, scams & digital abuse

Note what changed and when. A sign is a reason to seek advice, not proof by itself.

- ☐ Unsolicited calls about prizes, debts, utility problems, or government benefits
- ☐ Gifts, gift cards, or money sent to people the person has never met in person
- ☐ A new romantic partner met online who is requesting money or personal information
- ☐ Unexplained purchases, subscriptions, or donations the person cannot explain
- ☐ Pressure from callers to act immediately and to keep this secret
- ☐ Callers claiming to be from a government agency demanding urgent payment
- ☐ An unusually large volume of charitable solicitation mail
- ☐ The person appears confused, distressed, or secretive after phone calls or online sessions
- ☐ Accounts accessed from unfamiliar devices, locations, or at unusual times
- ☐ Social media activity or messages that seem out of character
- ☐ Pressure to pay for products, services, or fees using gift cards
- ☐ The person has shared passwords, PINs, or financial details with online contacts

Date / what happened / who was present

10 / SAFETY & PROTECTION

Concerns in a care setting

Note what changed and when. A sign is a reason to seek advice, not proof by itself.

- ☐ Staff are dismissive, impatient, rough, or openly disrespectful toward residents
- ☐ Family visits are discouraged, restricted, or made difficult by staff
- ☐ The person seems afraid to speak in front of certain staff members
- ☐ Unexplained injuries, bruises, or changes in the person's physical condition
- ☐ The person appears unusually sedated without a clear medical reason
- ☐ Staff cannot explain injuries or changes in the resident's condition
- ☐ Personal belongings, money, or valuables are missing or unaccounted for
- ☐ The resident is frequently left in soiled clothing for extended periods
- ☐ The resident's requests, complaints, or needs are consistently ignored
- ☐ The facility is visibly understaffed during visits
- ☐ Complaints raised with management are dismissed or not investigated
- ☐ The resident asks to leave, expresses fear of the facility, or fear of specific staff
- ☐ Other residents or visitors have raised similar concerns
- ☐ There are visible signs of unsanitary conditions or poor infection control

Date / what happened / who was present

10 / SAFETY & PROTECTION

A clear record. A safer next step.

Keep this page somewhere safe. If a device or account may be monitored, use a safer way to seek support.

Date, time and place

What I observed / what the person said

Immediate support sought / who was contacted

Advice received and next steps / follow-up date

For suspected financial loss, contact the financial institution through a trusted number and ask for urgent fraud support. A lawyer or the Seniors Safety Line can help you consider further steps.

SOURCES & USING YOUR COPY

A place to check the details.

Use the original source for current services, eligibility and contact information. This is an organising tool, not an assessment or individual medical, legal or financial advice.

Ontario Health atHome: home care and getting started

ontariohealthathome.ca/home-care/

Ontario Health: Health811

health811.ontario.ca/

211 Ontario: community and social services

211ontario.ca/

9-8-8: Suicide Crisis Helpline

988.ca/

Ontario Caregiver Organization: helpline

ontariocaregiver.ca/helpline/

Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario: Seniors Safety Line

eapon.ca/seniors-safety-line/

Ontario: powers of attorney

www.ontario.ca/page/make-power-attorney

Advance Care Planning Ontario

www.advancecareplanningontario.ca/

Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority: public register

www.rhra.ca/en/retirement-home-database/

Bereavement Authority of Ontario: consumer information

thebao.ca/for-consumers/consumer-information-guide/

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