



CASL

Chamber for the Advancement of Senior Living · Toronto & the GTA

The Kind Downsizing Planner

A lifetime of belongings deserves a plan, not a panic. Work through this over weeks, not days.

General guidance for Ontario families, prepared 2026. Programs, rules, and rates change — confirm current details with a qualified professional before acting.

Step 1 — Set the frame (start 3-6 months ahead)

- Agree on the destination first: how many rooms, how much storage does the new home actually have?
- Measure furniture and the new floor plan — decide what fits BEFORE sorting anything.
- Pick a pace: one room per week beats one exhausting weekend. Start with the least emotional room (usually the garage or linen closet, never the photo albums).

Step 2 — Sort with four labels

- KEEP — it fits the new home and the new life.
- FAMILY & GIFTS — offer specific items to specific people, with a reply-by date.
- SELL / DONATE — estate sale, consignment, auction, or charity pickup.
- LET GO — broken, duplicate, or expired. A junk-removal service handles the rest.

The 12-month rule: if it hasn't been used in a year and carries no deep meaning, it goes in SELL/DONATE.

Step 3 — Handle the meaningful things kindly

- Photograph sentimental items you can't keep — the memory lives in the story, not the object.
- Create ONE memory box per person — a real box with a lid, not "a corner of the basement".
- Record the stories: 10 minutes of voice memo about grandma's clock is worth more than the clock.

Step 4 — The practical checklist

- Get 2-3 quotes from senior-move specialists (they pack, move, AND set up the new home).
- Book charity donation pickups 2-3 weeks ahead — popular charities have waitlists.
- Change of address: bank, pension, health card, subscriptions, CRA.
- Plan moving day for the senior to be elsewhere — with family, not watching boxes leave.
- Set up the new bedroom and bathroom FIRST at the destination, familiar items visible.

CASL tip: our network includes downsizing specialists, estate-sale advisors, and senior-focused realtors who coordinate the whole move. One consultation can turn this checklist into a done-for-you plan — free for families.